ABSTRACT

MPEG video compression is an efficient but complex video compression standard. Manipulation of MPEG video usually entails decoding, manipulating and recoding the video, but this is inefficient and causes degradation of the content. The present invention provides a range of transition effects to be generated without knowledge of the video material into which they are to be inserted. The synthesised transition pictures of the invention are inserted between two consecutive I- or P-pictures. Many effects are very efficiently constructed from a small number of explicitly coded macroblocks and a large number of skip blocks. Even for those effects where all of the macroblocks must be explicitly coded, this is done with very little information in each block. Accordingly, the invention allows fast and efficient processing and obviates the need to decode the MPEG to insert the transition and often requires no changes to the existing pictures.